

VOTER SUPPORT OF TRANSGENDER CANDIDATES: HOW POLICY PLATFORMS AFFECT VOTER SUPPORT

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ABSTRACT

Voter Support of Transgender Candidates: How Policy Platforms Affect Voter Support

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Literature Review

Voter support of transgender candidates is a very important sign to see the level of support for transgender people. This support is important because it goes against the negative perspectives that many people have for transgender individuals. However, a transgender candidate does signal certain things to voters. When voters are cued that a candidate is transgender, they view them as more liberal and possibly believe that they are less likely to represent the issues that are important to the voter (Jones and Brewer 2019: 698). Some voters will even change their vote to the opposing party if their party of preference puts forward a transgender candidate for election (Jones et al. 2018: 265). Lastly, some find that the political office that is being contested does not affect voter support. The level of support for transgender candidates is constant no matter if the political office they are running for is local, state, or national (Haider-Markel et al. 2017: 410). In order to test whether all of these aspects are constant with respondents, more test is needed.

Thesis Statement

Transgender candidates have fought for the rights that they have and are now fighting to be included in the policy making process by running as candidates in political races. I will be

conducting research to see if there is a bias against transgender candidates and extending previous research by testing to see if transgender candidates can minimize the penalty that they receive because of their gender identity by running their campaign on a policy platform that is bi-partisan. These candidates employ different strategies in order to be elected; therefore, transgender candidates have the best chance of being elected when they run using bi-partisan issues compared to a transgender or state-level policy issue.

Theoretical Framework

Many times, voters use cues such as the candidate's gender or race to evaluate the candidate. Voter's often want a candidate to have descriptive representation. This type of representation occurs when a candidate shares similar traits to the voter like gender or race. Descriptive representation regularly plays a role in who voter's support during a political campaign. I want to investigate if transgender candidates can mitigate the penalties that they receive based on their descriptive representation by using substantive representation. This form of representation occurs when a political candidate shares similar views to the voter. Substantive representation also plays a role in who voter's support during a political campaign because many times voters want someone who supports the same policies that the voter does. I want to extend this framework to include gender identity and understand how this interacts with a candidate's gender.

Project Description

My research question concerns the public's opinion of transgender politicians and how the policy platforms that these candidates choose to run on affect voter support. This research is important to the field of political science because there is a lot of research that needs to be done in this area. The first transgender politicians are being elected to office, and it is important to see

if the public supports these politicians. My project is different from other research because it focuses on the public's opinion of these people after they have been elected to office. My research builds on other research by testing how different policy platforms affect voter support for transgender candidates at the state level. I expect to find that the public's opinion is mild when it comes to their support of transgender candidates with the highest level of support for them being when they run on a left-leaning platform. I expect that some opinions will strongly support these candidates while others will strongly oppose these candidates. However, I expect the majority of respondents to be weakly opposed to transgender candidates.

DEDICATION

To my parents, Casey and Tonia Hale. I would never have been able to do this without your love and support.

To Bowie Joseph Hale. You are the best four-legged boy on the planet, and I would not be the person I am today without your companionship and love.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Peterson for his guidance and support throughout the course of this research.

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Finally, thanks to my mom and dad for their encouragement and support to follow my dreams and to pursue what makes me happy. I will never be able to thank you enough for everything that you have done for me. Thank you for supporting me while I completed this project, and I hope that it makes you proud.

INTRODUCTION

With transgender candidates emerging in local and state elections, the question of how they will represent their constituents arises. Participating in a representative democracy indicates that voters want the people that represent them to share similar interests to them and have the same stances of issues. Since the number of transgender candidates has risen slowly since the early 2000s, the debate over how well they represent the larger population has been a point of contention. Voters are concerned about whether transgender candidates share similar interests with the larger population, or if they will only represent issues that are affecting the LGBTQ community.

This project examines if certain policy platforms affect voter support for transgender candidates by analyzing the support for a transgender candidate running for office. Furthermore, this project attempts to replicate the findings of the Jones and Brewer article from 2019 on whether there is a penalty for transgender candidates. I believe that transgender candidates may be able to mitigate a gender penalty by focusing on certain types of issues that do not focus directly on their gender. I use data collected from a survey run on the campus of Texas A&M University to determine whether voters penalize transgender candidates and which policy platforms help transgender candidates succeed in elections.

CHAPTER I

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Review

While the majority of LGBTQ politicians have been gay men and women, transgender candidates have started to make successful runs for elected seats in their local and state governments (Haider-Markel and Bright 2014). Since the beginning of the 2000s, a handful of transgender candidates have run for political office, with an even smaller number of these candidates winning their elections (Casey and Reynolds 2015; Taylor and Haider-Markel 2014). The majority of transgender politicians serve at the local level, with a select few at the state level.

Research suggests that transgender candidates face a similar kind of discrimination from voters to the discrimination that other historically disenfranchised candidates like women and people of color face during elections. Many voters view nontraditional candidates as leaning to a more liberal standpoint on issues (McDermott 1997). This research is important because of the lack of research done for transgender candidates. Since transgender candidates have only started emerging onto the political stage in recent years, studies on voter support for these candidates are in their beginning stages. Therefore, by looking at other nontraditional candidates such as women, people of color, and other members of the LGBTQ community, we can theorize how transgender candidates are viewed by voters.

When looking at how women running for office are perceived, there is evidence that they faced voter discrimination during the 1960s and 1970s (Baxter and Lansing 1980). However, more research into the attitudes of voters suggest that they are now more open to nontraditional

candidates such as women (Thomas and Wilcox 2014). Further experimental research by Hayes and Lawless suggest that women do not face any significant disadvantages when judged by voters (2016).

However, this evidence does not guarantee that nontraditional candidates are treated the same among voters. Many voters will stereotype candidates' party affiliation based on the language used to describe the candidate. When a candidate is described using feminine language, voters perceive the candidate as more Democratic and more positively if the candidate is a Democrat (Bauer 2014). Furthermore, Bauer suggests that when masculine stereotypes are imposed on female candidates, they view the leadership abilities of the female candidates the same regardless of their party affiliation (2014).

In the case of candidates of color, exit poll data from the 1990's suggests that voters of both party affiliations did not discriminate against black candidates in the U.S. House of Representatives election (Highton 2004). This research suggests that voters' perceptions of black candidates has improved since the 1950's and 1960's following the Civil Rights Movement. However, in studies run using hypothetical black political candidates, researchers found that white voters are less likely to support black candidates when there is a white candidate positioned in a similar position (Kinder and Sears 1981; Moskowitz and Stroh 1994; Reeves 1997). These findings suggest that descriptive representation and race may play a role in how voters evaluate political candidates. If descriptive representation impacts voter support for candidates, then it would be reasonable to infer that transgender candidates are at a disadvantage based on the number of transgender people are in the population.

Concerning LGBTQ candidates, 74 percent of Americans say that they would support a well-qualified candidate for their party's presidential nomination if they were gay or lesbian

(Saad 2015). Although this percentage is lower than the support for women (92%), Black (92%), and Hispanic (91%), the percentage of Americans who would support a gay or lesbian candidate has increased significantly since the beginning of the twenty-first century (Saad 2015).

Since there are always some voters that will reject a candidate based on their race, gender, and even more voters reject a gay or lesbian candidate, it is likely that voters will display even less support for transgender candidates than any other group of nontraditional candidates (Haider-Markel, Miller, Flores, Lewis, Tadlock, and Taylor 2017). In order to understand this pattern, we need to look at information concerning gay and lesbian candidates because voters most likely view and evaluate these candidates in similar ways.

One of the biggest players to impact the level of LGBTQ candidates that run for office is the attention that is brought to the LGBTQ rights. Haider-Markel finds that as the attention surrounding gay and lesbian rights and as the visibility of gay and lesbian people increases, number of gay and lesbian candidates that run for office increases (2010). One cause of this rise in gay and lesbian candidates running for office is that they want to represent gay and lesbian issues, which can increase descriptive representation for the LGBTQ community. Furthermore, there is strong evidence that also offers that when there is even a small number of visible LGBTQ candidates that there is a larger encouragement for the adoption of gay-friendly legislation (Reynolds 2013). This legislation includes bills on marriage equality or civil partnership equality. The rise in this form of identity politics also helps to recruit other LGBTQ candidates to run for political office, so that they can represent their political interest group. However, when voters were given a hypothetical gay and lesbian candidate, they evaluated the candidate at a lower level than they did the heterosexual candidate (Reynolds 2013). Furthermore, they also suggested that they would less likely vote for the gay and lesbian

candidate over the heterosexual candidate (Golebiowska 2001; Golebiowska and Thomsen 1999; Herrick and Thomas 1999). In an additional experiment by Tadlock and Gordon (2003), they find that gay and lesbian candidates were not less likely to be supported and that they might even be preferred over other heterosexual candidates with the exact same qualities. However, their findings contradict the findings from surveys run on the general population, which suggest that voters are more likely to support and vote heterosexual candidates over gay and lesbian candidates.

An analysis of national polling data from 1994 to 2006 shows that about twenty-five percent of adults would oppose a gay or lesbian candidate for state or national legislative seats (Haider-Markel 2010). Survey data conducted during the 2012 Senate campaign of Wisconsin's Tammy Baldwin, an openly gay woman, reveals that about sixty percent of respondents would support a gay candidate while fifteen percent were unsure of how they would vote. Among the Democrats that were polled in the survey eighty percent would support the gay candidate (Haider-Markel and Bright 2014). This survey data suggests that most of the Democratic affiliated voters would support an openly gay or lesbian candidate. Only a consistent twenty-five percent of the surveyed population opposed gay and lesbian candidates. This percentage has been consistent since the 1990's.

Survey data has also shown that if a voter opposes one group of nontraditional candidates, they are likely to oppose nearly all other groups perceived as nontraditional candidates. The group that opposes nontraditional candidates is the older, white, male, with less education, lower income, more religious, and is a conservative leaning Republican (Haider-Markel and Bright 2014). This group of voters is more likely to vote for a conservative or Republican candidate over a liberal or Democratic candidate regardless of the candidates' sexual

orientation, gender, or race. This points to the inference that the opposition to candidates is based on perceived ideology or partisanship, not on race, gender, or sexual orientation.

These surveys help create the historical space for transgender candidates to enter the political stage. While transgender candidates have only started to emerge in recent years, we can theorize how voters view these candidates based on how voters view other nontraditional political candidates. When voters are only given information that the candidate is transgender, they view the candidate as inherently more liberal, less likely to represent constituents, and less likely to receive the vote of the voter (Jones and Brewer 2019). Jones and Brewer's (2019) work suggests that gender identity is enough of a cue for voters to assume the candidates political party affiliation. Furthermore, the opposition of transgender candidates is thirty-five to forty percent among the general population, which is slightly higher than the opposition of gay and lesbian candidates which is approximately thirty percent (Haider-Markel et al. 2017). Most voters would support transgender candidates if the candidate shared the same views as them on issues (Haider-Markel et al. 2017). These findings are consistent with other LGBTQ candidate studies.

Transgender candidates are most likely to be supported by voters that will also support other groups of nontraditional candidates. Voters that are educated, Democratic and left-leaning, more affluent, and less religious are most likely to support transgender candidates (Haider-Markel et al. 2017). Voters in this demographic are also likely to vote for other types of nontraditional candidates (Haider Markel et al. 2017). Because transgender candidates typically run as Democrats, those who oppose transgender candidates are also unlikely to support other Democratic candidates, regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

One main concern for transgender candidates is how they are perceived by potential voters. Despite the visibility of transgender people in the media like Olympian Caitlyn Jenner and actress Laverne Cox, many people do not support transgender rights or transgender people (Jones et al. 2018). Many people view transgender people as less trustworthy, less happy, and less moral than people who are cisgender (Jones et al. 2018). These views affect the level of support for transgender candidates among the general population. Despite these negative views of transgender individuals, there is strong support for transgender workplace protections, military service, and student protections (Jones et al. 2018). However, the public is more divided on issues concerning issues like gender-neutral bathrooms (Jones et al. 2018). These findings show that even though transgender people are starting to emerge in the spotlight of Hollywood and other areas of popular culture, there is still a level of untrustworthiness between people who are cisgender and people who are transgender.

One important distinction concerns the overall electability of transgender candidates, regardless of their LGBTQ identification. Most of the elected transgender candidates are transwomen. Furthermore, they are typically in their late forties and are from the majority ethnic group of their local community (Casey and Reynolds 2015). This is noteworthy because men typically campaign for higher levels of office than women. Transwomen may also be seen differently by the public than transmen. Since there is no clear evidence on this claim, I hope to dive deeper into this through my research. While Jones and Brewer (2019) offer a brief overview of how their respondents view transgender women, they do not offer any evidence on how the respondents view transgender men. It is important to research and collect data for the broader transgender community. This data can also aid in the comparisons of the political gender gap within the transgender population to the cisgender population.

Transgender candidates are often strategic in their run for office. They need to run for seats that they have the largest likelihood of achieving election. These elections are often located in local governments and in places where their desired political party is the majority. Furthermore, transgender candidates run in districts where they have received a large amount of party or political experience (Haider-Markel 2010). This allows them to gain political favor among their fellow politicians and allows the constituents in their district to become comfortable with their leadership abilities before running for office. LGBTQ candidates often run as Democrats in order to avoid voters that would not vote for any Democratic candidate regardless of their ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation (Haider-Markel 2010). LGBTQ candidates achieve high levels of success when they do run for office because they are especially strategic about the areas and times when they run for office.

There was also a higher number of transgender candidates that ran for public office following the election of Donald Trump for President of the United States in 2016. During the 2018 election cycle, the number of nontraditional candidates that ran for public office was higher than what had been seen before. In 2018, a record number of 150 LGBTQ candidates were elected to office (Caron 2018). In Congress, the number of LGBTQ candidates hit a new record of holding 10 seats. While this is a small number of seats for one group to hold, it is significant because these numbers had not been seen before. Even though LGBT candidates have a higher chance of achieving seats in their local governments, this success had not previously transferred to elections for higher offices.

The emergence of transgender candidates holding seats in higher levels of politics can be linked to the election of Danica Roem in 2017. Roem ran for a seat in the Virginia House of Delegates. She was up against a longtime incumbent Bob Marshall who had served in the

Virginia House of Delegates for 26 years. The focus of her campaign was to fix Route 28, a state highway that often-had terrible traffic because of the growing number of commuters and poorly placed traffic lights. When reporters tried to steer the conversation towards her being transgender, Roem repeated the importance of transportation and her transportation-focused platform. While her opponent wanted to focus on the Virginia's proposed bathroom bill that would keep transgender people out of the bathrooms matching their gender identity (Affarone 2017). This was significant in that by choosing to speak about an issue that affected the entire population of her district instead of focusing on an issue affecting specifically transgender individuals, Roem successfully appealed to more voters. This is a strategy that transgender candidates use to achieve election. In an interview Roem stated "For every person who's sitting in traffic on the southbound side of Route 28, does anyone there care the gender of the person is who presents the idea to get them out of this mess" (Affarone 2017). Roem believes that the constituents of her district would not care about her gender, and in her case, she was correct.

Transgender candidates are the next group of people to enter the political stage. Therefore, researchers and political scientists are just scratching the surface on the impact of transgender politics candidates. While there are many articles concerning LGBTQ rights and gay and lesbian candidates, there is a lack of literature concerning transgender politicians. Many of the articles concerning transgender politics focus on transgender rights and the general population's attitudes towards transgender people. Very few articles are written concerning transgender political candidates. The articles that do concern transgender political candidates only focus on transgender women and offer little insight into the potential support for transgender men as candidates. Furthermore, there are few articles that focus on how different policy platforms affect voter support for transgender candidates versus cisgender candidates. The

research conducted in this paper will aim to provide answers to the questions of how voters react to both transgender men and women and how different policy platforms affect voter support for transgender candidates when compared to cisgender candidates.

Theoretical Argument

During this experiment, I expect to find that voters will be more receptive to transgender candidates when their policy platform concerns non-transgender issues. I also expect that voters will most likely support transgender women over transgender men. Therefore, when voters are presented with a hypothetical transgender candidate, they will support the candidate that runs on a non-transgender running platform because that platform appeals to a larger group of voters. My predictions are based on the value that voters place on the potential for effective substantive representation. Because of the small number of transgender voters, running on a platform focused on that affect a wider population than the LGBTQ community will appeal to a larger portion of the population. Previous research conducted by Haider-Markel, Brewer and Jones involving other candidates from nontraditional groups would support this theory. I am assuming that all of the respondents will understand the definitions of transgender men and women. Transgender men are people who were assigned to be female at birth but identify as male and transgender women are people who were assigned to be male at birth but identify as female. Just as previous research has investigated voter support of other nontraditional candidates, it is appropriate to investigate the support for transgender candidates. Transgender candidates comprise a small portion of the population and this contributes to the limited information on voter support.

For this project, I will be testing two hypotheses. My first hypothesis is that transgender candidates will be able to minimize the negative effect that their gender identity has on the level

of support that they receive from voters by running on an education policy platform over a bathroom bill policy platform. My second hypothesis is that transgender candidates, of any type, will receive less support from voters.

CHAPTER II

METHODS

Methodology

In order to test the hypothesis of my project, I conducted a survey experiment among a group of college students at Texas A&M University. These students participated in this experiment voluntarily and were chosen because they of their registration in an entry level Political Science course. The experiment consisted of a short news article followed by a series of questions gauging the respondents support for the hypothetical candidate described in the news article, questions gauging their consumption of news, and then questions regarding their demographic information. The news article described a hypothetical political candidate running for a position within a state's House of Representatives. The candidate was assigned their gender from one of four categories: cis-male, cis-female, trans-male, or trans-female. In the news article, the candidate ran their campaign on one of two different policy platforms: education or the bathroom bill. In order to eliminate an additional factor concerning the hypothetical candidate's political party, all candidates took the left-leaning position of expanding funding for both issues in the survey. The survey was randomized among all of the participants to ensure an equal sample size for all of the survey groupings. The news article used in this experiment was framed similar to the news article used in the experiment described in "Gender Identity as a Political Cue: Voter Responses to Transgender Candidates" (Jones and Brewer 2019). In their short article, their first study involved surveying a group of 1000 people to gauge the respondents support for a political candidate when they are cued that the candidate is transgender (Jones

Brewer 2019). The news article in my experiment followed a similar structure as the one that Jones and Brewer used in their 2019 study.

CHAPTER III

DATA AND RESULTS

Results

This survey had 270 respondents. The demographic information that the respondents provided help us understand the responses that they gave while taking the survey. The majority of the survey respondents were male at 144 respondents followed by the female demographic at 125 respondents. One respondent of the survey identified as gender fluid. When asked if the respondents knew someone who identified as transgender, 58.15% of the respondents said that they did not know someone who was transgender. This may play a role in analyzing the affects that the gender cue in the news article provided. When respondents provided their political ideology, 41.48% identified themselves on the conservative side of the ideological spectrum, 33.33% identified as moderate, and 25.18% identified themselves on the liberal side of the ideological spectrum. However, when respondents were asked to gauge their support for LGBTQ policies like same sex marriage and banning transgender people from the military, the majority of respondents took the stance that was favorable to the LGBTQ community. From the responses that the participants gave, the sample is relatively conservative but does not take openly anti-transgender attitudes.

The first regression model run for the data was to test the affect that the candidate gender cue had on respondents support for the candidate. The regression model is seen in table 1. As seen in the regression, the candidate gender cue affected the support for the candidate negatively. The coefficient of $-.48$ shows that the respondents supported the transgender candidate at lower levels than the cis-gender candidate. The size of the effect that the candidate's gender had on the

level of support is large. Since the level of support is measured on a seven-point scale from strongly support to strongly oppose, the impact of the negative coefficient drops the level of support for the candidate by half a point if the candidate is transgender. Since the level of support drops by at least half a point on the seven-point scale, the effect that candidate gender has on the level of support is also substantively significant. Furthermore, this finding is consistent with my second hypothesis because it shows that respondents support cis-gender candidates at higher levels than transgender candidates. The finding is also consistent with the results from the Jones and Brewer article from 2019. The negative effect of a candidate identifying as transgender is echoed in results of both studies.

Table 1. Regression Model Showing Level of Support for Candidate based on Gender

. reg candidatesupport_alll candidategender_new						
Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	269
Model	15.6900077	1	15.6900077	F(1, 267)	=	6.78
Residual	618.109249	267	2.31501591	Prob > F	=	0.0097
				R-squared	=	0.0248
				Adj R-squared	=	0.0211
Total	633.799257	268	2.3649226	Root MSE	=	1.5215
candidatesupport~lll						
	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
candidategender_new	-.483184	.1856	-2.60	0.010	-.8486097	-.1177583
_cons	4.954198	.1329356	37.27	0.000	4.692463	5.215934

The next regression model run for the data was to test the affect that the candidate gender cue had on respondents' views of the candidate's ideology. The regression model is seen in table 2. As seen in the regression, the candidate gender cue affected the respondents view of the candidate's ideology positively. The coefficient of .79 shows that the respondents saw the transgender candidate as more liberal than the cis-gender candidate. While the respondents were not given a cue for the candidate's political party, the gender cue that they received had a large

impact on how they evaluated the candidate. The participants of the survey evaluated the candidate's ideology on a seven-point scale from very conservative to very liberal. The impact of the .79 coefficient adds almost one point to the seven-point scale, which can move the assessment of the candidate's ideology from slightly liberal to liberal. This is a large impact because the movement of one point on the seven-point scale can highly impact how respondents and voters assess a candidate and can lead to a candidate either gaining or losing votes. This impact is substantively significant because of the large impact that the candidate gender has on the assessment of candidate ideology.

Table 2. Regression Model Showing View of Candidate Ideology Based on Gender

. reg candidateideology_all candidategender_new						
Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	269
Model	42.0856248	1	42.0856248	F(1, 267)	=	21.48
Residual	523.185751	267	1.95949719	Prob > F	=	0.0000
				R-squared	=	0.0745
				Adj R-squared	=	0.0710
Total	565.271375	268	2.10922155	Root MSE	=	1.3998
candidateideology~l						
	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
candidategender_new	.7913486	.1707549	4.63	0.000	.4551511	1.127546
_cons	4.541985	.1223029	37.14	0.000	4.301184	4.782785

The next regression model run for the data was to test the affect that the policy cue had on the respondent's level of support for the candidate. The two policies that were cued in the news article were education and the bathroom bill. The regression model is seen in table 3. As seen in the regression, the policy cue affected the level of support for the candidate negatively. The coefficient of -.45 shows that the respondents supported the candidate running on the bathroom bill platform at lower levels than the education platform. The size of the effect that the randomized policy platform had on the level of support is large. Since the level of support is

measured on a seven-point scale from strongly support to strongly oppose, the impact of the negative coefficient drops the level of support for the candidate by half a point if the candidate runs on the bathroom bill platform. Since the level of support drops by at least half a point on the seven-point scale, the effect that policy platform has on the level of support is also substantively significant. Furthermore, this finding is consistent with my hypothesis because it shows that respondents support the candidate running on the education platform at higher levels than the candidate running on the bathroom bill platform.

Table 3. Regression Model Showing Level of Support for Candidate based on Policy Platform

. reg candidatesupport_alll policy_platform						
Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	269
Model	13.8167916	1	13.8167916	F(1, 267)	=	5.95
Residual	619.982465	267	2.3220317	Prob > F	=	0.0154
				R-squared	=	0.0218
				Adj R-squared	=	0.0181
Total	633.799257	268	2.3649226	Root MSE	=	1.5238
candidatesu~lll	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
policy_platform	-.4534241	.185881	-2.44	0.015	-.8194031	-.087445
_cons	5.392355	.2961892	18.21	0.000	4.809192	5.975519

The last regression model run for the data was to test if the transgender candidate can minimize the effect that their gender has on the level of support that they receive from voters by focusing on policy platforms that are not tied to their gender identity. The regression model can be seen in table 4. As seen in the regression, the coefficient of .04 shows how much the transgender candidate can improve the level of support that they receive by not running on the bathroom bill platform. The size of the effect that the education platform has for the transgender candidate is very small. Since the level of support is measured on a seven-point scale from strongly support to strongly oppose, the impact on the level of support that the transgender

candidate receives is still lowered by at least half a point regardless of the policy platform that they run their campaign on. Since the level of support drops by at least half a point on the seven-point scale, the effect that policy platform has on the level of support is also substantively significant. The finding is significant because it shows that when transgender candidates run for political office that they have to find other ways to appeal to voters besides running on policy platforms that are not gender specific. Furthermore, this finding disproves my first hypothesis because the transgender candidate cannot minimize the impact that their gender has on the level of support that they receive from voters. From the regression, it is seen that candidates regardless of their gender receive less support when they run on the bathroom bill platform than if they run on the education platform.

Table 4. Regression Model Showing Support for Candidate based on Gender and Policy Platform

. reg candidatesupport_alll candidategender_new##policy_platform						
Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	269
Model	33.9759041	3	11.3253014	F(3, 265)	=	5.00
Residual	599.823352	265	2.26348435	Prob > F	=	0.0022
				R-squared	=	0.0536
				Adj R-squared	=	0.0429
Total	633.799257	268	2.3649226	Root MSE	=	1.5045
candidatesupport~lll						
	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
candidategender_new trans	-.5753589	.2663399	-2.16	0.032	-1.09977	-.0509472
policy_platform bathroom bill	-.5490431	.2663399	-2.06	0.040	-1.073455	-.0246314
candidategender_new# policy_platform trans#bathroom bill	.045223	.3704422	0.12	0.903	-.6841615	.7746076
_cons	5.272727	.2028651	25.99	0.000	4.873295	5.67216

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this experiment was able to replicate the earlier study conducted by Jones and Brewer in 2019. I was able to find similar results that transgender candidates receive lower levels of support than their cisgender opponents. In my experiment, it did not matter which policy platform the transgender candidate ran their campaign on, the respondents of the survey showed lower levels of support for the transgender candidate by a factor of -.48. This replication occurs despite a very different sample in my study than the one used by Jones and Brewer. In this survey, the majority of the respondents of the survey identified as conservative but did not hold primarily anti-transgender attitudes. While the sample possessed these attributes, they still showed lower levels of support for the transgender candidate than the cisgender candidate. Overall, this sample penalized the transgender candidate compared to the cisgender candidate.

The findings for whether a transgender candidate can limit the negative penalties that they receive from voters based on their gender by using different policy platforms in their campaign are not statistically significant. This experiment found that transgender candidates cannot use campaign tactics to avoid gender penalties. In this study, while the transgender candidate running on the education platform was able to slightly decrease the gender penalty that they received the difference was not large enough to be statistically significant. The idea brought forth in the beginning of this paper regarding whether transgender candidates can use campaign tactics to avoid gender penalties was not supported by the data. Therefore, using campaign tactics is not an effective solution to minimizing the penalty that transgender candidates face when they run for political office. This null finding is an important advancement to the literature,

as it shows that further research may be done to discover what may effectively mitigate the disadvantage that transgender candidates face when they run for political office.

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